

# NEWS

## *Child Nutrition*

SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE EDITION

February, 2003 / Vol. 2, No. 6

### **The Cafeteria Atmosphere**

The criteria listed below contribute to a high quality cafeteria atmosphere.

- ✓ Meal periods are scheduled at appropriate times.
- ✓ Activities such as pep rallies, tutoring, club meetings, band, etc. are not scheduled during meal times.
- ✓ Meal periods are long enough for students to eat and socialize.
- ✓ There are enough serving areas and/or processes are in place so that students don't have to spend too much time waiting in line.
- ✓ The dining area is attractive and has enough space for seating; tables and chairs are the right size for students.
- ✓ Recess for the elementary grades is scheduled before lunch so that children will come to lunch less distracted and ready to eat.
- ✓ The school encourages socializing among students and between students and adults.
- ✓ Adults properly supervise the dining room and serve as role models to students.
- ✓ Creative methods are used to keep noise levels appropriate – no "eat in silence," no whistles, no buzzing traffic lights.
- ✓ Facility design is given priority in renovations or new construction.
- ✓ Hand washing equipment and supplies are in a convenient place so that students can wash their hands before eating.
- ✓ Drinking fountains are available for students to get water at meals and throughout the day.
- ✓ Schools use an accounting system that protects the identity of students who eat free and reduced price school meals.



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This project has been funded with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

## ► From the Director's Desk

### Reversing the Trends Conference

**O**n December 12, about 45 intrepid folks attended a conference in Montpelier entitled "Reversing the Trends: Improving the Nutrition Environment in Your Middle and High School." Although 150 people had registered, attendance was hampered by a snowstorm that closed schools across the state and challenged drivers who did venture out. We are grateful to those who managed to get to the conference for their interest and dedication.

We had heard from high school food service managers that too often our nutrition education projects appealed to elementary students but just were not relevant to the high school setting. So when we were writing a grant application to get funds for nutrition education and activities to address the nutrition environment, we decided to include a conference aimed at the high school audience. Our goal in developing the Reversing the Trends conference was to focus on the significant issues that high schools and middle schools face in providing a high quality nutrition environment.

For several months, the airwaves and the newspapers have been full of stories about the obesity crisis facing our young people and the poor eating habits of Americans in general. From the decline in calcium intake that seems sure to result in an epidemic of osteoporosis, to the dismally low intake of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains that could be protecting us from cancer, to the supersizing of portions and of physiques, to the general lack of regard for the importance of food and nutrition in our children's lives, we can see that Americans are not implementing the Dietary Guidelines and that we are not helping our children to develop and practice healthy eating behaviors.

Our goals at the conference were not so much to repeat that data because we felt that those who were attending already had heard the message. Rather we wanted the conference to provide practical tools for initiating change, present concrete examples of success, and offer inspiration to send the participants back to their respective schools with a vision and a commitment for improving the nutrition environment.

We do need to take action to reverse the unhealthy trends and re-establish the link between healthy eating and enjoyment. We must clearly identify the responsibilities that we as adults have, the values we



promote and the choices that must be made. These are not easy issues. It often seems that the problem that food service programs face is a three-sided tightrope. The sides are composed of:

- What foods should be provided in order to meet the nutrition standards?
- What will students eat?
- What can the program afford?

None of these questions is easy to answer. For example, what students will eat depends on many factors including what they are used to eating at home, food quality, cafeteria atmosphere, time available, nutrition education and other marketing or promotion activities that have been conducted to encourage them to participate.

However, it is important to keep in mind that the nutrition **environment** includes more than the food service program. It includes all of the food that is sold, served or eaten at school and school related events. It includes all of the values and messages that students receive about the importance of healthy eating behaviors. And it includes the opportunities that students have to practice those healthy eating behaviors. It includes the message that is conveyed when the school store sells coffee and donuts and candy bars and soda at 8 a.m. It includes the values expressed when the Booster Club raises funds for athletics by selling outsized chocolate bars. It also includes the opportunity to learn about and enjoy healthy food when the French Club puts on a dinner featuring international dishes.

Many high school and middle school students attended the conference on December 12. It was clear that their interest and involvement will be critical to achieving successful changes. Several of the conference speakers reminded us of the energy and creative thinking that students can bring to the task of making changes. We hope that they will be leaders in reversing negative trends and starting a new movement towards a healthy lifestyle.

Food plays a critical role in everyone's life. It nurtures bodies, enhances social relationships, and imparts pleasure. And there are many studies that show that good nutritional status has a measurable impact on learning. How can we fail to acknowledge that food and nutrition are vital to effective

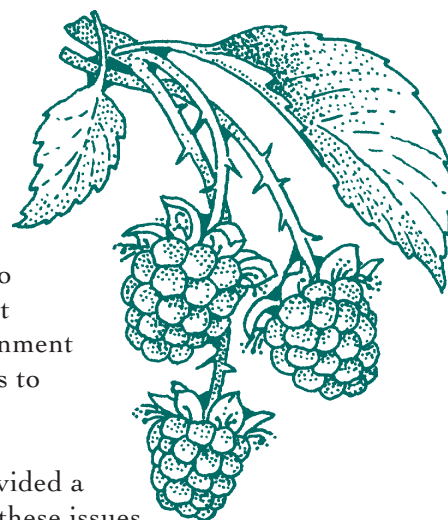
learning, to thriving students, and to successful schools?

How can we sidestep this challenge to provide the best possible environment for our students to learn in?

While the conference provided a venue to bring these issues to the forefront, we know that making change is not easy. We know that there are many stakeholders that have to be brought on board. We know that schools don't have an of excess resources lying around to ease the way. And we know that there will be hard choices to make. But if we need to make realistic choices, if there are compromises to be made, we at least need to make conscious, informed decisions rather than accepting situations by default.

If there are choices to be made we need to have clearly stated visions and goals so we know which choices bring us closer, and which divert us from, achieving the nutrition environment we want and students deserve.

For those who were unable to attend the conference, I hope you will use the materials in these newsletters to help you begin to address these issues as well. Whatever age group you are working with, the school nutrition environment would benefit from having a clearly stated nutrition policy, involvement of students in a nutrition advisory council, a commitment to the promotion and practice of healthy eating, and an openness to trying new approaches. All of us must do our part, large or small, to reverse the unhealthy trends and create a positive nutrition environment at every school in Vermont.



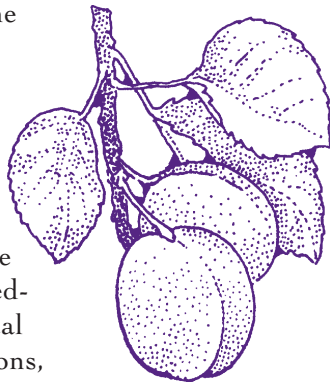
– Jo Busha, *State Director*

## ► Focus on Pleasant Eating Experiences

**S**tudies show that environment has a powerful effect on behavior. Evidence of this can be seen in the cafeteria or other location where students eat. When there is enough time to eat, mealtime is scheduled at a reasonable hour, the eating space is pleasant and attractive, and adults serve as role models for healthy eating and interact with students in a friendly and positive manner, everyone benefits. When one or more of these conditions do not exist or are less than ideal, the greater the chances are for students to eat only part of their lunch or skip lunch entirely, to exhibit inappropriate behavior, and to return to class without the opportunity to have relaxed and renewed their energy that is so essential to optimum learning.

### The Issues

An ideal cafeteria setting supports and encourages students to make healthy choices, pay attention to what they eat, enjoy the sensory aspects of a healthy meal, and develop and practice social skills. When these conditions are lacking, the nutritional status of children can be compromised, the educational process can suffer, and participation in the meals programs is not likely to be optimized. Some of the issues that interfere with eating foods that contribute to health (or prevent students from eating at all) have been identified by students. These include lack of time to eat, inappropriate scheduling of meals and physical activity, crowded conditions, excess noise, and an uninviting cafeteria atmosphere.



**Time.** With the increased emphasis on student performance, academic classes are getting high priority in scheduling. This often leaves the time allotment for electives, breakfast, and lunch to whatever is left over. As a result, students may have no time for school breakfast because the school day starts earlier and the buses arrive only

### Success Story #1

Many schools overcome the “time for breakfast” problem by greeting students in the lobby with a “grab-and-go” breakfast cart.

The count is taken at the cart.

Students can take breakfast to the classroom where the calmer atmosphere promotes eating.



minutes before classes begin. The lunch periods may be shorter and there may be fewer lunch periods. Common outcomes are longer lines, increased noise, and crowded seating areas in the cafeteria. In addition, students may have to choose between eating lunch and going to band or chorus (or other school activity) because they are scheduled during lunch periods. In some instances, students have no scheduled lunch period at all!

The results of one study focusing on middle schools showed that rather than wait in line, students skip meals or eat food from vending machines. Vending machines may also be the choice of students who don’t have a scheduled lunch period. Most vending machine offerings are not highly nutritious.

Giving students more class time at the expense of time for and access to school meals can be counterproductive. Research shows that students who eat breakfast learn better, score better on tests, exhibit disruptive behavior less often, and have fewer absences. Hunger as a result of skipping lunch can have similar effects, especially if the student hasn’t had breakfast!

**Student readiness.** Children and young adults need to eat on a regular basis to provide their bodies with the nutrients and energy they need to grow and develop. When meals are scheduled too close together, or much earlier or much later than a



“usual” meal time, student behavior and concentration can be affected. For example, students may not be hungry for lunch at 10:30, especially if they have had breakfast at 7:30 or 8:00. They may eat less than if their lunch time was closer to the middle of the day, or they may skip lunch because they are not hungry. If they do eat lunch at 10:30, they may be feeling and exhibiting the effects of hunger well before the school day ends. A late scheduled lunch may mean that students are hungry long before they get the opportunity to eat. Scheduling lunch between 11:00 and 1:00 is recommended.

Another readiness issue is related to the timing of recess and lunch for elementary students. When lunch is before recess, many students rush through lunch or finish only part of it because they want to get outdoors with their friends. Research has shown that children are calmer and eat more of their lunch when recess is held before lunch. Students benefit because they get more nutrients from the meal if they eat more of it. Food service benefits because there is less waste. And the teachers benefit because meal time has provided a transition time between activity and returning to the classroom.

**Space and noise.** Shorter lunch periods and/or fewer lunch periods, usually means more crowded cafeterias and a higher noise level. In addition to students opting to skip lunch or buy from vending machines, students have less opportunity to meet their needs for relaxing and socializing.

A study conducted by Mary Kay Meyer involved 568 students in grades 3-5 from nine states. According to the results, younger children’s opinions about their cafeteria environment and what they want it to be like are very similar to what older children and adults prefer: a clean cafeteria and a quiet environment.

In Minnesota, the Department of Children, Families & Learning commissioned a student focus group study in 2001. Students in grades 9-12 from eight schools participated in “Focus on the Future: What Eating at School Should Look Like — A

## Success Story #2

In Ferrisburgh, the principal reads a short chapter from a popular book during the lunch period for grades 1-3. He uses a microphone so everyone can hear in the spacious gym that serves as cafeteria. The students enjoy some quiet time to focus on eating while being entertained. They appreciate the sense of warmth and community the reading aloud activity conveys.

Principal Marcus says that the students in grades 4-8 prefer social interaction during lunch so the reading is only done during the first serving period when the younger students eat.

Student Perspective.” They were asked several questions that focused on current perceptions of high school aged students regarding school meal programs.

Several students commented on crowded space and noise levels. Some excerpts follow. “I just hate it when I’m sitting at a table and I’m eating and someone kicks your chair. I don’t even want to eat lunch because there is not enough room.” “Lunch time should be something to look forward to....Instead it’s so crowded you can’t relax.” “Space out the tables and shorten the lines to

get less traffic and commotion...All the bumping and jostling really bothers me.”

**Appearance and décor.** The physical appearance and setup of the cafeteria can go a long way toward making it a place where students want to eat and socialize, an environment that encourages appropriate behavior. Students notice how clean the cafeteria is or isn’t, they notice how the cafeteria atmosphere affects them. The following comments are from the Minnesota study illustrate these points. “They need another lunch period to reduce the crowd, and I think that would help students and staff keep a cleaner environment.” “Keep garbage cans away from food areas.” “The same fruit/



vegetable posters have been on our walls forever. Have interesting artwork.” “Put garnish or other decorations around the salad bar as in restaurants. Things would look more appealing rather than seeing where someone slopped the dressing all over.” “Keep the tables and chairs cleaner and less sticky.”

**Teachers and Administrators.** Adults in the school play an important role in the atmosphere of the cafeteria. Adults who have contact with the students need to model appropriate behavior and interact with students in a friendly and positive manner. When adults participate in the Program, they are “saying” it is a good thing. When they eat with their students, they are helping in the socialization process and can set good examples for students to learn table manners and carry on a meal time conversation. When the only role that teachers and administrators play is “patrolling” the cafeteria, they are seen as “police” which sets a far different tone than when the adults are interacting in a positive way.

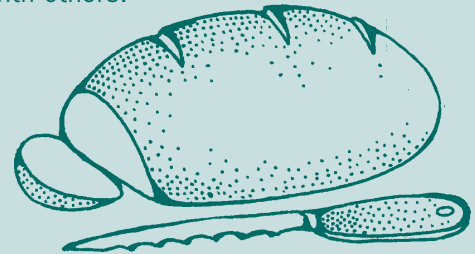
**Food Service Staff.** A study that involved middle school students showed that food service staff demeanor was one of the three of the most important factors influencing students’ food selections and participation in the National School Lunch Program.

Students in the Minnesota study also expressed concerns about the attitude and friendliness of food service staff. “..it’s like a jail and they just slop the food on your plate and you move along.” “They don’t warn you when the money in your account is getting low unless you ask.” “The cooks often have a bad attitude. They make excuses and scold the students if we complain.” “The food looks like they just slapped it on your tray. They don’t care whether it looks appealing or not.”



### Success Story #3

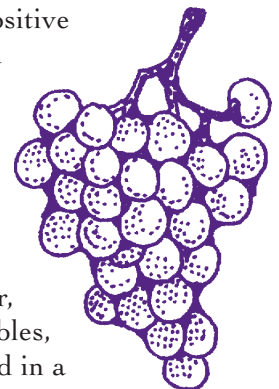
A few schools hold special dinners. Tables are covered with tablecloths and places are set with silverware. Flowers or other centerpieces are used. Students and teachers “dine” together. The atmosphere is relaxed and congenial. Mealtime becomes a learning experience in developing social skills, table manners, and enjoying food with others.



### Addressing the Issues

It is clear from the information gleaned from studies that have been conducted that students know what they want, what they like, and what they do not like about their own school food service program experiences. They have expressed the need to have enough time to eat and relax, to have an eating space that is pleasant, and to have choices among food items that are appealing. In short, they are looking for food service that is customer centered rather than producer centered. How can schools balance meeting the needs of students with the pressure to assure that students meet the required academic standards?

**Focus on the “good stuff.”** Often when situations are less than ideal, we tend to focus on identifying the problems and “fixing” them. Another approach is to identify the positive areas and work to strengthen them. Sometimes when positive aspects are enhanced, the negative aspects take care of themselves. For example, reducing fat in a meal does not guarantee the meal is healthy. However, when plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains are included in a meal, the fat content more or less



takes care of itself because there is less room for high fat items and other foods that do not contribute an abundance of nutrients to the meal. In the same way, making improvements in the cafeteria setting by giving students time, space, pleasant surroundings, and appealing meal choices, noise and behavior problems may be dramatically reduced without focusing attention on them.

**Involve those who will be affected.** Based on observation of the interaction among team members that attended the conference, “Reversing the Trends,” it was clear that each individual had a vested interest in planning for changes and implementing the plans. They were enthusiastic about change because they were part of it and they would benefit from the outcomes.

Few schools, if any, have a lot of extra resources available for making drastic changes. But when faced with a challenge, groups of individuals can often be very creative. For example, a student group might work to raise money to repaint the cafeteria. An art class might turn the cafeteria into an “art gallery” and take responsibility for changing the displays on a regular basis. Food service might try making more items self-serve to help speed up the serving line. Each school community will have unique situations and unique ways to improve the atmosphere in the cafeteria.

**Keep your “eyes on the prize.”** Working to help students meet high academic standards is a goal no one would argue with. To help students reach that goal, their



entire school experience needs to contribute to this goal. Considering the impact that the school meal experience has on the nutrition and attitudes of students, can schools afford to think of the school meals program as separate from academic learning programs? High quality school meals programs can only help to enhance the overall educational experience and help prepare students for the challenges that lie ahead.



## References

*Changing the Scene Kit, Improving the School Nutrition Environment*, USDA in conjunction with several other organizations, 2001.

*Fit, Healthy and Ready to Learn, Part I: Physical Activity, Healthy Eating, and Tobacco Use Prevention*, National Association of School Boards or Education, March 2000.

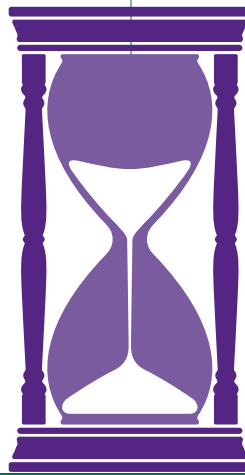
*Focus on the Future: What Eating at School Should Look Like — A Student Perspective*, A Report Commissioned by the Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning – Food & Nutrition Service, Report Submitted June 15, 2001.

## ► Administrative Update

### CNPWeb – Are You Getting Ready?

**T**he project is progressing! In January, the state staff will have an opportunity to see what the new application and reimbursement system for school meals will actually look like on screen and how it will work. Up to this point, we have been working with the developers on all the background information. Another topic that we will focus on is training those who will use **CNPWeb** — when we will schedule training, and where and how we will be doing the training. Stay tuned for more information as the school year progresses.

As with all new systems, there will be changes in the way information is reported to the state. Some of these are outlined below.



Although all School Food Authorities will be required to use **CNPWeb**, we remind you that this does not mean the food service manager will be required to have a computer. However, there needs to be a computer with internet capability that can be accessed for filing the necessary records. It is recommended that access to

**CNPWeb** be through the use of an IBM compatible personal computer that uses Microsoft Windows 9X, ME NT or XP operating system with a minimum resolution of 800 x 600. The recommended browser is Internet Explorer version 4.0 or greater, or Netscape Navigator version 4.5 or greater. Use of any other browser will not be supported. For user access via modem, a 56K or faster connection is recommended.

	Current	CNPWeb
<b>Renewal Information</b>	Renewal information is submitted on a paper form each year. If incomplete, Child Nutrition Programs calls to collect additional information or corrected data.	Renewal information will be completed via CNPWeb. The system will not allow “sending” the information until the form is completed correctly.
<b>Free and Reduced Data</b>	Free and reduced data is submitted via a paper form. Child Nutrition Programs contacts SFA if information is incomplete or unclear.	Free, reduced, and enrollment data will be taken from the October claim for reimbursement (that has been filed electronically).
<b>Monthly Meal Count</b>	Monthly meal counts from all sites in SFA are combined and reported on the Claim for Reimbursement form.	Monthly meal counts will be reported by site.
<b>Claim for Reimbursement</b>	Meal counts and financial data are reported each month.	Meal counts will be reported monthly. Financial data will be reported yearly.
<b>Severe Need Breakfast Reimbursement</b>	For severe need breakfast schools, per meal breakfast costs are calculated each month at DOE based on the financial data on Claim for Reimbursement form.	All eligible schools will be paid the full severe need rate. At the end of the year the SFA will submit meal cost data. If necessary, excess payments will be reclaimed.



## A Cautionary Tale

It is Friday afternoon before the beginning of February vacation and you are almost finished cleaning up the kitchen. The trays are washed and put away, the counters are scrubbed. There is a half-pan of macaroni and cheese and several servings of salad left over.

"What should I do with this," you ask yourself. "These foods don't freeze well. I know it won't be any good after it is thawed. And I can't just put it in the cooler because it will go bad before January. But it seems too bad to throw out all this perfectly good food. Maybe Cindy and June and I can divide it up. I hate to see food go to waste. And there's room enough for it in the cooler I brought to take home the frozen shrimp I bought from our supplier. Boy that sure was a lot cheaper than buying them at the store."

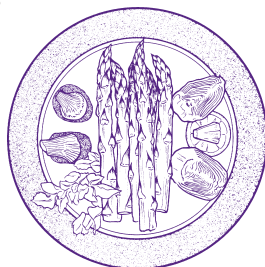
**STOP!**

Two things are going on here that are not appropriate for school food service managers and staff. First, as reasonable as it seems to divide up leftover food and take it home, it is a violation of federal regulations. Federal funds spent for food for the school meals programs may not be used for personal benefit. Secondly, purchasing food from your vendor for personal use can create a questionable situation for yourself and your Program. If someone sees you with food purchased from a vendor, the assumption is likely to be that you are stealing from the Program, not that you purchased the food for your own use.

As a public employee you must always be conscious of the public trust. Therefore, keep in mind these rules that will help assure that your program conforms to the highest ethical standards.

- Do not take leftover food home and do not give it to others to take home.
- Do not order food for personal use from the school's food suppliers. Also, do not place orders for others for their personal use.

Adhering to these practices prevents people from thinking you are taking advantage of your position and also keeps you in compliance with federal regulations.



## More Good News about Breakfast!

Did you know that eating breakfast can help in losing weight and maintaining that weight loss? Data from Nielsen's National Eating Trends Survey indicated that women who eat cereal more than seven times in a two-week period weigh an average of 8 pounds less than women who seldom or never eat cereal. Both men and women who eat cereal infrequently are more likely to be overweight or obese.

Recent research by the National Weight Control Registry (NWCR) showed that nearly 80 percent of the NWCR participants eat breakfast every day as part of their routine to maintain their weight loss. Of those participants who do eat breakfast, 60 percent said they usually or always eat a bowl of cereal. This study was reported in a recent issue of the journal, *Obesity Research*.

About 3,000 individuals participate in NWCR. To qualify, a person must have lost at least 30 pounds and maintained that weight loss for more than one year. However, the average weight loss for the current participants is 60 pounds and six years is the average time they have kept the weight off.

Researchers give the following reasons that eating breakfast every day may be essential to losing weight and maintaining weight loss:

- Breakfast can reduce hunger later in the day that often leads to overeating.
- Breakfast eaters may be better able to resist fatty and calorie dense foods later in the day.
- Nutrients consumed at breakfast may improve people's ability to be more physically active.

Making breakfast available to students and making it easy for them to access breakfast may be another step that schools can take to help stem the tide of the obesity epidemic.

**National  
School Breakfast  
Week  
March 3-7, 2003**



## ► Frequently Asked Questions

In recent years we have seen increasing emphasis on the importance of ensuring that children with disabilities have the same opportunities as other children to receive school meals. It has been particularly challenging for schools to assure children's safety and to make necessary accommodations in recent years due to the increase in children with severe food allergies. The following information is based on the USDA publication *Accommodating Children with Special Dietary Needs in the School Nutrition Programs*.

**Q** *If a family requests special meals or special precautions because their child has a food allergy, what documentation should the food service program get before granting the request?*

**A** A child with a disability must be provided substitutions in foods when that need is supported by a statement signed by a licensed physician. The physician's statement must identify the child's disability and provide an explanation of why the disability restricts the child's diet, the major life activity affected by the disability, and the food or choice of foods that must be substituted.

A sample Medical Statement can be found in Vermont Department of Education's manual *Special Meals for Special Needs*.

**Q** *Is a food allergy a disability?*

**A** Generally, children with food allergies or intolerances do not have a disability as defined under either Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or Part B of IDEA and the school may, but is not required to, make food substitutions for them.

However, when in the physician's assessment the food allergy may result in severe, life-threatening (anaphylactic) reactions, the child's condition would meet the definition of "disability", and the substitutions prescribed by the physician must be made.

**Q** *There is a student in our school who has a life-threatening allergy, which causes anaphylactic reaction to peanuts. The slightest contact with peanuts or peanut derivatives, usually peanut oil, could be fatal. Is it sufficient for the school food service to avoid obvious foods like peanut butter, or must the school food service staff research every ingredient and additive in processed foods or regularly post all of the ingredients used in recipes?*

**A** The school has a responsibility to provide a safe, non-allergenic meal to the child if it is determined that the condition is disabling. To do so, the school food service staff must make sure that all food items offered to the allergic child meet prescribed guidelines and are free of foods which are suspected of causing the allergic reaction.

This means that the food labels or specifications will need to be checked to be sure that they do not contain traces of such substances. In some cases labels will provide enough information to make a reasonable judgement possible. If they do not provide enough information, it is the responsibility of the school food service to obtain the necessary information to assure that no allergic substances are in the food served.

In some cases, it may be necessary to contact the supplier or the manufacturer. Private organizations such as the Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network may also be consulted for information and advice. It is also wise to check with parents about certain foods and even provide them advance copies of menus.

The general rule in these situations is to exercise caution at all times. Do not serve food to children at risk of anaphylactic reactions if you do not know what is in those foods. It is important to recognize that a child may be provided a meal that is equivalent to the meal served to other children but not necessarily the same meal. Sometimes it may be advisable to prepare a separate meal "from scratch" using ingredients that are allowed on the special diet rather than serving processed foods.

## ► *On the World Wide Web*

**T**here is a lot of information out there in cyberspace. When you are looking for nutrition information, how can you tell if it is reliable and up to date?

- Look for information about the agency or organization sponsoring the web site and the authors who provide the content.

- Read credentials carefully.
- Find out if the information is based on sound science.
- Look for a balanced view of nutrition. Be skeptical if foods are labeled “good” or “bad.”
- Look beyond the appearance of the web site. An attractive site doesn’t mean reliable information.

### Check Out These Sites

American Dietetic Association: <http://www.eatright.org>

Dietetics online: <http://www.dietetics.com> /

USDA Food & Nutrition Information Service: <http://www.nalusda.gov/fnic/>

FDA/Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN): <http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/list.html>

Healthy Body Calculator: <http://www.dietitian.com/ibw/ibw.html>

Healthy School Meals Resource System: <http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov/>

Interactive Food Guide Pyramid: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/Fpyr/pyramid.html>

Download a full color picture of Pyramid: <http://www.nalusda.gov/fnic/Fpyr/pyramid.gif>

The Virtual Nutrition Center: <http://sun2.lib.uci.edu/HSG/Nutrition.html>

Five-A-Day for Better Health: <http://www.dcpc.nci.nih.gov/5aday>

National Food Service Management Institute: <http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/nfsmi>

Promotional ideas for fruits and vegetables: <http://www.dole5aday.com/>

Promotional ideas for milk: <http://www.got-milk.com/>

Information on milk: <http://www.whymilk.com/>

School menus from all over the United States: <http://www.schoolmenu.com/>

American School Food Service Association: <http://www.asfsa.org>

Child Nutrition Programs in all 50 states: <http://schoolmeals.nalusda.gov:8001/States/state.html>

Eat Smart. Play Hard.® Campaign: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/FNSmascot/default.htm>

Nutrition ideas for kids, families, teachers and school food service managers (from The National Dairy Council): <http://www.nutritionexplorations.org/>

Links to a wide range of nutrition-related web sites, all of which have been evaluated for accuracy and usability: <http://www.navigator.tufts.edu/>

The Vegetarian Resource Group: <http://www.vrg.org/>

Information and support for families with children with diabetes:

[http://www.childrenwithdiabetes.com/index\\_cwd.htm](http://www.childrenwithdiabetes.com/index_cwd.htm)

Interactive quizzes, recipes, and a virtual kitchen tour lets you learn about various foods including nutrition content, purchasing and storage tips, and ideas for how to use them:

<http://www.dietitians.ca/english/frames.html>

Information for parents, teachers and kids: <http://www.team.uconn.edu/>

Vermont Department of Education Child Nutrition Programs: [www.state.vt.us/educ/nutrition](http://www.state.vt.us/educ/nutrition)

Nutrition education materials, catalog, activities: <http://www.newenglanddairyCouncil.org>

Information on milk, yogurt, and cheese: <http://www.nationaldairyCouncil.org>

## ► Important Dates

### February 1, 2003

Deadline for completing monitoring for all schools that use a Food Service Management Company and/or SFAs with more than one site.

### March 1-31, 2003

**National Nutrition Month® (NNM)** is a nutrition education and information campaign sponsored annually by the American Dietetic Association (ADA). The campaign is designed to focus attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits.

To obtain permission from ADA for theme or artwork usage, see the Guidelines for Using NNM Service Mark and Slogan at <http://www.eatright.org> or if you have questions, contact ADA at 312/899-4853 or e-mail [knowledge@eatright.org](mailto:knowledge@eatright.org).

### March 3-7, 2003

**National School Breakfast Week** will be here before you know it! The American School Food Service Association determines a theme each year and develops menus to support the theme. This year the theme is **Make Your Morning Count with School Breakfast**. Menus, recipes, and other information related to National School Breakfast can be found on ASFSA's web site at <http://www.asfsa.org/meetingsandevents/nsbw/>.

February, 2003, Vol. 2, Issue 6

#### Vermont Department of Education

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Layout: Mirabile Design  
Printing: Accura Printing, Inc.

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